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FROM: Kika de la Garza

Washington D C

WHILE NOT TRYING TO SECOND GUESS President Jimmy Carter, there has been talk of his proposing a gasoline tax when he makes his recommendations for an energy policy April 20.

During the President's brief visit to McAllen last fall I hope he noticed that our area has little intracity and no intercity mass transit systems. We only have the old reliable bus. For that reason, as opposed to urban areas, we must drive long distances to work, shopping areas, church, health care facilities and most other functions.

A gasoline tax would hurt rural areas such as ours, and I hope the President will keep this in mind before he makes his recommendations. A further tax on gasoline as a means of conservation is not the answer to our energy problem. I long ago made my suggestions available.

* * *

THE MEDICALLY DISABLED might claim their disability on income tax due 15 April -- provided that the Senate acts and the President has signed into law by then a bill now in the Senate. Under this act, the medically disabled can retain the maximum \$100 per week exclusion for the year 1976. The House has passed this bill.

Late last Congress, 12 October 1976, the Tax Reform Act of 1976 wiped out among other items this sick pay exclusion effective 1 January 1976. Since the Act was enacted into law so late in the year, it was manifestly unfair to people who had set up their tax plan for 1976 based on eligibility for the exclusion.

If the Senate acts to alleviate this situation, this bill should be law before the April 15 deadline which is right on us. If not then taxpayers may file an amendment to their returns, if and when ultimately enacted.

In this way, taxpayers will be treated more equitably and given an opportunity to make their plans accordingly.

* * *

MUCH OF THE ACTIVITY in a congressional office revolves around representing the various interests of the district before pertinent legislative committees.

In that connection, Wednesday I appeared before the Subcommittee on Public Works of the House Committee on Appropriations supporting eight projects in the 15th Congressional District. Six of the projects cover water delivery for four water control and improvement districts in the Valley and two flood control projects in the upper part of the district -- the Palo Blanco and Cibolo Creek in the Falfurrias area and the San Diego Creek in the Alice area. There is always, of course, the maintenance money for our Port of Brownsville.

Representatives of the Hidalgo County Water Control and Improvement District Number One appeared with me seeking funding for their loan application. They included Mr W L Miller, Mr Richard Wiesehan, and Mr William Shea.

* * *

SPANISH WAS THE LANGUAGE OF THE HOUR when the Texas A & I University drama company, Teatro Bilingue, came to Washington to perform HISTORIAS PARA SER CONTADAS at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater.

Only eight schools were chosen to participate in the annual American College Theater Festival -- another great honor for A & I.

For the benefit of the many unable to understand Spanish the entire excellently done performance was repeated in English and lost none of its effect! As a member of the audience, I enjoyed seeing how those around me reacted to the English version.

About the entire affair there was the aura of a premier -- the enthusiastic response -- the visit behind stage -- the reception in the Atrium after the performance. This is the big time and the A & I troupe took it like the pros they are.

We are proud of both A & I, its Department of Speech and Drama, and the four young people, J Ed Araiza, Luis Munoz, Jose Trevino, and Ruby Nelda Perez.

* * *

SPRING HAS ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON -- after the coldest winter in 200 years. Landscape damage is heavy from winter burn -- maybe we'd call it freeze damage in South Texas since we don't have the melting snow to contend with -- but the tulips are out in brilliant hues, the azaleas are blooming in their splendid tints, and the trees are painted in color.

While the famous cherry blossoms came and went before the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, the spring flowers are beautiful as always. They signal the northern winter is gone for another year. I saw the first robin, and it reminded me that now the time has come to mow the lawn!!!!

* * *

VISITORS FROM HOME: Visiting my office from home this week were Miss Ruby Nelda Perez of Alice; Mr W L (Sonny) Miller and Mr Richard Wiesehan of Edinburg; Mr Pearson Knolle of Sandia; and Mr William R Shea of Weslaco.

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